

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2010

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to you to express our deep concern for our country's troops that return home with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and our support for what appears to be a successful treatment for it. On March 31, we met with researchers and veterans from Soul Medicine Institute, a nonprofit organization which has had success in treating PTSD.

Through a program called the Iraq Vets Stress Project (www.stressproject.org), these doctors have performed several studies on the treatment of PTSD, including two randomized controlled trials (RCTs). The studies have investigated a simple behavioral intervention, known as Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). The most recent study showed that out of 48 treated veterans with PTSD or comorbid symptoms, an amazing 86% were cured after only 6 hours of EFT treatment.

The tool that was used to assess the severity of their symptoms before and after treatment was the widely accepted PTSD Checklist - Military version (PCL-M). The Stress Project believes it became evident that not only did the veterans respond rapidly to EFT, they also maintained the treatment benefits throughout the one-year follow-up period. The Stress Project continues to host a large nationwide network of EFT providers who offer free or low-cost treatment to all veterans suffering from psychological distress.

As this is written, there is growing awareness of EFT's efficacy in the treatment of PTSD. Senator Carl Levin and others have written letters in support of EFT research to the VA and the Defense Center of Excellence (DCoE). The mental health clinic at Walter Reed Army Medical Center has a replication of the most recent EFT study under design at this very moment. Some therapists at Ft. Hood, Texas and other bases presently use EFT in their PTSD treatment programs. A copy of a research poster from Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) and an abstract of the RCT are attached for your review. You can review the study in detail at www.StressProject.org.

It is vital that our returning troops have access to effective PTSD treatments if they are affected by this debilitating condition. Research has shown EFT to reduce PTSD symptoms effectively. Previous studies have also found that it can be self-applied, quickly learned, and is free of side effects. Its military implications cannot be underestimated.

Some concrete steps toward bringing EFT into your research and treatment programs might include:


1. Request reports from the Veterans Administration and active duty clinicians who are presently using EFT with their patients with PTSD.

2. Invite a group of veterans, clinicians, and researchers from the Iraq Vets Stress Project to DCoE or the Veterans Administration to demonstrate EFT and share the findings of these studies.
3. Study the effects of EFT when delivered to large groups of troops or veterans at one time. Group EFT treatment sessions have been shown to be effective in civilian populations. Soul Medicine Institute has prepared a replicate study that can be put into practice with minimal effort and cost in the military setting.
4. Replicate previous 6 one-hour EFT treatment studies within DCoE / VA.
5. Circulate the results of the existing EFT trials to DoD/VA clinicians working with PTSD patients and inform them of this effective supplementary therapy.
6. Refer clients with persistent PTSD to the Iraq Vets Stress Project for treatment until DoD is able to provide EFT from within its own establishment.
7. Other initiatives that fit with your established programs and priorities.

We are optimistic and look forward to your response in regard to what concrete steps can be taken to move forward with the EFT treatment at this time.

Sincerely,


Daniel E. Lungren
Member of Congress


Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress


Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

2 attachments

Identical letters sent to:

COL Robert W. Saum, Commanding General, Defense Center of Excellence in Mental Health
COL Donald L. Noah; Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Force Health Protection and Readiness
COL Thomas R. Yarber; Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center
LTC Jennifer Lange, M.D.; Walter Reed Army Medical Center

cc: Senator Carl Levin
Thomas R. Insel, MD; Director, National Institute of Mental Health
Harvey V. Fineberg, President IOM / Institute of Medicine
Pamela S. Hyde, Administrator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Brig. Gen. James Lukeman, US Marine Corps Headquarters